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Religious Department.

NEOS EPISCOPOS, Editor.

INQUIRER NO. 2, AND "PRESBYTER."

THERE is so little that is objectionable in the first of these articles, that we hardly think it worth while to advert to it. There are indeed a few things in it that are very decidedly so, and some of them rather whimsical; as, for instance, the repetition of the assertion that the absence of a succession necessarily drives on to infidelity; and that the ministry is *visible*, while the church is *invisible*, &c. But leaving out a few such notions as these, we don't know but the essay may be considered on the whole, as quite orthodox; though, at times, rather foggy. We therefore will await for some further demonstration, and in the meantime say a few things for the benefit of our respectful correspondent, "PRESBYTER."

First, then, we return him our thanks for his assurance of a proper appreciation of the motive which prompted us to a discussion of the subject. This is more credit than editors always get for honesty of purpose, and ought, therefore, to be noted. We are also much gratified that he proposes to bring the matter wholly to the test of "the scriptures," and abide the issue; for we especially rely upon these in determining the matters of "doubtful dispute," pertaining to doctrine, discipline and general practice. We therefore hope he will abide by this commitment, as it may save much trouble if the discussion is continued.

These things premised, we proceed to say that we are at a complete loss to imagine how he supposes us to hold the position that every man, woman and child who saw our Lord and heard his voice, and even that could work a miracle, was an Apostle. By what rule of interpretation could he come to such a conclusion? Certainly we did not so write, and all his argument on this point does not, in our judgment, twist our remarks into a resemblance to such a sentiment. We have seen no one else who thinks so, and therefore hope that in this particular, "PRESBYTER" will have no "successors," as he seems to have no cotemporaries. What we said was simply, that to be an Apostle, one must have those qualifications; not that every one who had them *was* an Apostle. Why to be an Episcopalian minister, we suppose one must be confirmed by the Bishop, but every one confirmed by the Bishop is not a preacher. To be a deacon in a Baptist church implies a previous immersion in water of this officer, but many thousands have been immersed that were never deacons.

But does "PRESBYTER," or any of his fraternity seriously dispute that these things, i. e. having had personal acquaintance with Christ in some way, and the possession of these letters patent from heaven, the power of performing supernatural works, were necessary to the recognition of a man as an Apostle. Then do we confess to a piece of information not before in our possession, that any Protestant, living or dead, (except a few temporarily misguided persons like those mentioned in our article that called "PRESBYTER" and "INQUIRER" to the rescue,) did hold such a position. We knew that they contended for a chain of connection between their own church and that at Jerusalem, but we did not know that any Protestant sect claimed to be in possession of Apostles. Strange, that they don't call them so. "Apostle" is quite as dignified as "bishop."

But as it seems that "PRESBYTER," at last, denies the necessity of any extraordinary qualifications for the apostleship, we perhaps cannot do him a better piece of service than to present for his consideration a few passages from "the Book," for which he professes, and we have no doubt sincerely, so much reverence.

When by the betrayal of his Master, Judas fell from his position, it was necessary that some one should occupy his place, and we find that the Church at Jerusalem proceeded to the installation of another soon after our Lord's ascension. What then said Peter on this occasion?—"Of these men which have accompanied with us, all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning with the baptism of John unto that same day that He was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection." "And they gave forth their lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven Apostles."—Acts, 1 ch. Now, there is some disagreement among theologians, as to whether this act of appointing Matthias to the apostleship was in accordance with the divine will, and there are, in our judgment, just grounds for a doubt on the subject. But leaving this out of the question, the transaction goes to show that in the opinion of the Apostles themselves, it was an *indispensable qualification* for the office of the Apostleship, that the appointee should have had a personal acquaintance with Christ.

Take another example, the fullest and most striking that can be found in the New

Testament, that of Saul of Tarsus. Why, we ask, the miraculous circumstances attending his conversion? Were they simply to effect his conversion? Then it is certainly very remarkable, that of the many millions who have come to the knowledge of the truth, and who have lived and died in the faith, that not another one, since the ascension, has seen the Saviour or heard his voice, that they have one and all done so simply through the belief of the testimony of the Apostles, and Evangelists, and other witnesses to the truth. True it is, that at Pentecost, and at the house of Cornelius, the truth was miraculously confirmed, and that for a special purpose, by the descent of the Holy Spirit. But on neither of these occasions did any one see, or hear the voice of Christ. True it is, that on many occasions during the ministry of the primitive disciples, there occurred miraculous things, to give credit to their mission, and to put to silence the wicked opposition of Jews and Gentiles, and to confirm the faith of the disciples. But never did, and never has Christ appeared or spoken to any one on earth, in conversion, since the day that "a cloud received him out of sight," except to Saul of Tarsus, and that to make him, what he ever after called himself, "Paul an Apostle of Jesus Christ."

"But what saith the Scripture."—Acts, 23d ch., 14 to 15th vs. When Ananias came to Saul in obedience to God's direction, he said, "The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldst hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard."

Again, in his defence before Agrippa, Paul represents Christ as saying to him—Acts 26 ch. vs. 16, 17—"For I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee, delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee." Mark the expression, a minister and a witness, not a Christian, but to enable him, like the other Apostles, to bear personal testimony to the things which he spoke.

This man Paul also, in writing to the Church of Corinth, 12 ch. 2d Cor., v 12th, says, "Truly the signs of an Apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds."

Turn again to Gal. 1st chap. After announcing himself as "an Apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father who raised him from the dead," Paul proceeds to say in the 11th and 12th vs. "But I certify you brethren that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For neither received it of man, neither was I taught it but by revelation of Jesus Christ." This certainly goes to show that his commission as an Apostle was not from the Church, but directly from heaven.

That the Apostles also had the power of bestowing upon the disciples the gift of tongues and of working miracles, that by the laying on of their hands, the Holy Ghost was given, is evident from the 8th and 9th chapters of Acts.

Now, in the 5th chapter we find that Philip, an Evangelist, when he preached at Samaria, performed wonders before the people, but he could not bestow that power on any others. Hence, when the Apostles at Jerusalem heard of the great things at Samaria, how that the people received the word of God, "they sent unto them Peter and John, who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost." Then laid they their hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost.

In the 19th chapter, Paul finding certain disciples at Ephesus, 6th v.—"And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spoke with tongues and prophesied." Thus we see that the apostleship was the channel through which God bestowed this blessed gift upon the believers. Have diocesan Bishops, or other ministers, ever given any such evidence of their succession to these ministers plenipotentiary of heaven?

But why pile up evidence in a case so plain? Verily any one must "see through a glass darkly" that imagines he discovers an official resemblance between the Bishops of our day and land, and the Christ-called and commissioned ambassadors, that went forth from the capital of Judah's ancient dominion.

We have a few words to say in regard to the Blackstone illustration, and then we have a proposal to make by way of conclusion. Without noticing the whole quotation, let us come at once to "the river." This famous stream that runs by "London town" is always the same, though the particles that make it are continually changing. Well, let it be so, and we think it decidedly unfortunate for "PRESBYTER's" argument that it is so. Now every one of these particles which are continually "succeeding" each other are in all respects similar. As a lawyer friend remarked to us the other day, "their constituent elements are the same." They are not

at one moment water, the next milk, again molasses, &c. &c. They are water all the while, possessing all the properties of water. They will quench thirst, drown a man, cleanse from filth, float a vessel and drive machinery. An unhappy comparison, it strikes us, for the heterogeneous "succession," which sectarians have tried so hard to establish.

Now for the proposal. We have published three articles from correspondents on this question and have written two replies, unless this be regarded as two in one, then we have written three, which puts us all even. We now propose a cessation of hostilities. Our reasons for this are, that what we have written already has been done contrary to the advice of friends, and those, too, who had a right, by virtue of the relation we sustain to one of the churches in this village, to advise us. For our own part we have no objection to an occasional breaking up of the dull monotony, a listless indifference, which the regular order of things will often bring about. In fact we rather like it. But friends think differently about these things, and we don't wish to be contrary.

It is thought in the present state of religious feeling amongst us, that a discussion of this character is calculated to divert the minds of people from the consideration of more important matters. We have on hand a communication from an esteemed friend, advocating our side of the question, and which it was our intention to publish this week, but which we have to suppress under the rule.

What we have written has been, not as a sectarian, but as an exponent of what we honestly think is taught in the Bible. The church with which we are connected has not had her claims to succession advocated. We believe in no succession, except to the doctrine and practice of the New Testament. Christ is there manifested in his word. The Apostles are there in what they wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He then who believes and acts according to what there set forth, will be saved. The church that sets acts in the regular line of succession, if her visible organization only beg yesterday.

HON. A. H. STEPHENS' LETTER.

GEO. ALEXANDER H. STEPHENS.—Dear Sir: Your remarks in this section, to a considerable extent, that you will decline to serve as a sign, afforded a refuge from despotism of popular rage. But French Jacobins, whether native or adopted, treated with equal scorn, the sentiments of religion and the feelings of humanity—and all that man has gathered from his experience upon earth, and the revelation he looked had been made from the sky, to bless and adorn his moral existence, and elevate his soul with immortal aspirations, were spared as imposture by these false destroyers. They would have deprived man from his humanity, as they attempted to decree God out of his universe. Not contented with France as a subject for their ruthless experiments—Europe itself, being too narrow for their exploits, they sent their propagandists to the new world, with designs as odious as those with which Satan entered Eden.

This is but a faint picture of some of the scenes enacted by that self same party, which was at first formed by those who styled themselves "the Friends of the Constitution." And where did these "secret Councils" we now hear of come from? Not from France, it is true—but from that land of isms, where the people would have gone into anarchy long ago, if it had not been for the conservative influence of the more stable minded men of the South. And what scenes have we lately witnessed in the Massachusetts Legislature, where this new political organization has more fully developed its policy, according to the rules of their action and the opinions I entertain. Hence my conclusion that they had no further use for us as Representatives; for I presumed they knew enough of me to be assured if they had any secret aims or objects to accomplish that they never could get my consent, even if they desired it, to become a dumb instrument to execute such a purpose. I certainly never did, and never shall, go before the people as a candidate for their suffrages with any principles in my pocket. It has been the pride of my life, heretofore, not only to make known fully and freely my sentiments upon all questions of public policy, but in vindication of those sentiments, to stand up to meet any antagonists arrayed against them, in open and manly strife—"face to face and foe to foe." From this rule of action, by which I have lived, I shall never depart. But you ask me what are my opinions and views of this new party called Know Nothings, with a request that you be permitted to publish them. My opinions and views, which I have given most cheerfully, and as fully and clearly as my time, under the pressure of business, will allow—You can share them as you please—publish them or not as you like. They are the views of a private citizen. I am at present to all intents and purposes whatever, literally one of the people. I hold no office nor seek any, and as one of the people I shall speak to you and them on this, and on all occasions, with that frankness and independence which I become a Freeman and an American citizen. In giving my views of "Know Nothingism," I ought, perhaps, to premise by saying, and saying most truly, that I really "know nothing" about the principles, aims or objects of the party. I am about to speak of them as they are kept secret—they are held in the dark—being communicated and made known only to the initiated and not to the people until after having been duly pledged and sworn. This, to me, is a very great objection to the whole organization. All political principles, which are sought to be carried into Legislation by any body or set of men in a republic, in my opinion, ought to be openly avowed and publicly proclaimed. Truth never shrinks the light or shrinks from investigation—or at least it ought never to do it. Hiding places, or secret coverts, are natural resorts for error. It is, therefore, a circumstance quite sufficient to excite suspicion against the truth to see it pursuing such a course. And in republics, where free discussion and full investigation by a free and intelligent people is followed, there never can be any just grounds to fear any danger even from the greatest errors either in religion or politics. All questions therefore, relating to the government of a free people,

ought to be made known, clearly understood, fully discussed, and understandingly acted upon. Indeed, I do not believe that a Republican Government can last long, where this is not the case. In my opinion, no man is fit to represent a free people who has any private or secret objects, or aims, that he does not openly avow, or who is not ready and willing, at all times, when required or asked candidly and truthfully to preclude to the assembled multitude not only his principles, but his views and sentiments upon all questions that may come before him in his representative capacity. It was on this basis that Representative Government was founded, and on this alone can it be maintained in purity and safety. And if any secret party shall ever be so far successful in this country as to bring the Government in all its departments and functions under the baneful influence of its control and power, political ruin will inevitably ensue. No truth in politics can be more easily and firmly established, either by reason or from history, upon principle or authority, than this. These are my opinions, candidly expressed.

I know that many good and true men in Georgia differ with me in this particular—thousands of them, I doubt not, have joined this secret order with good intentions. Some of them have told me so, and I do not question their motives. And thousands more will, perhaps, do it with the same intentions and motives. Should it be a short lived affair, or may it come to stay? But let it succeed—let it carry all the elections, State and Federal—let the natural and inevitable laws of its own organization be once fully developed—and the country will go by the board. It will go as France did. The first Jacobin Club was organized in Paris on the 6th Nov. 1789, under the alluring name of "the Friends of the Constitution," and its sole object was to overthrow the "American Republic." Many of the best men and truest patriots in Paris joined it—and thousands of the same sort of men joined the affiliated clubs afterwards—little dreaming of the deadly fangs of that viper they were nurturing in their bosoms. Many of these very men afterwards went to the guillotine, by orders passed secretly in these very clubs—members of the National Assembly and Convention, all of them, or most of them, were members of the clubs, for they could not otherwise be elected. And after the question was settled in the clubs, the members next day went to the nominal Halls of Legislation nothing but trembling automata, to register the edicts of the "Order." Though it was to be a monarch, or to cause the blood of the nation to flow, the French did these "secret Councils" of the Order, in history of no use? Or do our people really imagine that Americans would not do as the French did under like circumstances? "Is it any secret?"

Illinois can be as good a "Know Nothing" as any man in the "Macon Council," though he may vote, as he doubtless will, to repeal the Fugitive Slave law, and against the admission of any slave State in the Union; while Shields who has ever stood by the Constitution, must be rejected by Southern men because he was not born in the country? Upon this principle a Boston Atheist, who denies the inspiration of the Bible, because it sanctions slavery, is to be sustained by Georgia "Know Nothings" in preference to me, barely because I will not "bow the knee to Baal," this false political god. We have set up. The only basis of party organization is an agreement amongst those who enter into it upon the paramount question of the day. And no party can last long without bringing disaster and ruin in its train, founded upon any other principle. The old National Whig Party tried the experiment when there were radical differences of opinion on such questions, and went to pieces. The National Democratic Party are now trying a similar experiment, and are expanding in similar fate. This is what is the matter with it. . . . vital functions are endangered—hence that disease which now afflicts it is worse than the dry rot. And what we of the South now should do is, not to go into any "Know Nothing" humbug or mischief, as it may be, but to stand firmly by those men of the North who are true to the Constitution and the Union, without regard either to their birth-place or religion. The question we should consider is not who "shall rule America," but who will vote for such measures as will best promote the interest of America, and with that the interests of mankind.

But to pass to the other view of these principles—that is, the consideration of them as promoters of public policy. With me, they both stand in no better light in this aspect than they do in the other; the first assumes temporal jurisdiction in "forum conscientie"—to which I am quite as much opposed as I am to the spiritual powers controlling the temporal. One is as bad as the other—both bad. I am utterly opposed to mingling religion with politics in any way whatever, and especially am I opposed to making it a test of qualification for civil office. Religion is a matter between a man and his Creator, with which governments should have nothing to do. In this country the Constitution guarantees to every citizen the right to entertain whatever creed he pleases, or no creed at all, if he is so inclined; and no other man has a right to pry into his conscience to inquire what he believes or what he does not believe. As a citizen and as a member of society, he is to be judged by his acts and not by his creed. A Catholic, therefore, in our country, and in all countries ought, as all other citizens, to be permitted to stand or fall in public favor and estimation upon his own individual merits. "Every

man that has a large number of the same race that is not aliens by birth, but aliens in heart and feeling in the bosom of society.

Such was, to a great extent, the condition of the Helots in Greece—men of the same race placed in an inferior position, and forming within themselves a degraded class. I wish to see no such state of things in this country. With us at the south, it is true we have a "degraded caste," but it is of a race fitted by nature for their subordinate position. The negro, with us, fills that place in society and under our system of civilization for which he was designed by nature. No training can fit him for either social or political equality with his superiors; at least history furnishes us with no instance of the kind; nor does the negro with us feel any degradation in his position, because it is his natural place. But such would not be the case with men of the same race and coming from the same State with ourselves. And what appears not a little strange and singular to me in considering this last movement, is, that if it did not originate with yet it is now so generally and zealously favored by so many of those men at the North who have expended so much of their misguided philanthropy in behalf of our slaves. They have been endeavoring for years to elevate the African to an equality, socially and politically, with the white man. And now, they are moving heaven and earth to degrade the white man to a condition lower than that held by the negro in the South. The Massachusetts "Know Nothing" Legislature passed a bill lately to amend their Constitution, so as to exclude from the polls in that State, hereafter, all naturalized citizens, from whatever nation they may come; and yet they have made every negro slave from the South the same right to vote that they give to their own native born sons! They thus exhibit the strange paradox of warring against their own race—their own blood—even their own "kith and kin," it may be, while they are vainly and fanatically endeavoring to reverse the order of nature, by making the black man equal to the white. Shall we second them in any such movement? I cannot even contemplate them so far as to bear the same name—to say nothing of the same pledges, pass words, signs and symbols? Shall we affiliate and unite ourselves under the same banner, with men who acts show them to be governed by such principles, and to be bent upon such a purpose? This is a question for southern men to consider. Others may do it if they choose, but I, I tell you, I never shall; that you may set down as a "fixed fact"—one of the fixedest of the fixed. I am not at all astonished at the rapid spread of this new sentiment at the North, or rather new way of giving embodiment and life to an old sentiment, long cherished by a large class of the northern people, notwithstanding the paradox. It is true "Know Nothingism" stands on its own individual merits. "Every

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